

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 141  
By McNally

A RESOLUTION to create a special joint committee to study the harmful effects of sinkholes in Tennessee.

WHEREAS, the development and urbanization of previously rural and agricultural lands dominated by subsurface limestone formations is proceeding apace in the southern United States; and

WHEREAS, with such development comes sinkhole collapse, sinkhole folding, as well as foundation engineering and groundwater pollution problems; and

WHEREAS, limestone and dolomite, both prone to developing subsurface openings, underlie large areas of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, the lowering of the land's surface known as subsidence is a result of the settling of underlying rocks or sediments, and is mostly caused by the collapse or decrease of the spaces between sediments or rock grains; and

WHEREAS, subsidence has caused cracking in buildings and structures, with even greater hazards, such as flooding being posed by subsidence-caused changes in the land surface; and

WHEREAS, few states have enacted legislation requiring insurers to make available coverage for insurable sinkhole losses; and

WHEREAS, many people have been left in financial and emotional ruin as a direct result of homes and property collapsing under their own weight; now, therefore,

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BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That there is hereby created a special joint committee to study the economic impact of sinkholes in this state and possible solutions and remedial actions that might be taken by the legislature to provide relief to affected citizens.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the committee shall consist of three (3) members of the House of Representatives and three (3) members of the Senate, to be appointed by the respective speakers.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That all legislative members of the special joint committee who are duly elected members of the general assembly shall remain members of such committee until the committee reports its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the committee shall be convened by the member with the most years of continuous service in the General Assembly, and at its first meeting shall elect a chair, vice-chair and such officers the committee deems necessary.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That, at the request of the committee, the various agencies and entities of state government shall assist the committee in the performance of its duties.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the special joint committee shall report its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation or interim reports, to the One Hundred First General Assembly on or before February 15, 1997; at which time the committee shall cease to exist.

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